

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MORES

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the military, travelers, and ethnographers.¹ Of the Basutos it is said that the converted ones are the worst. They are dishonest and dirty.² In Central America it is said that the judgment is often expressed that "an Indian who can read and write is a good-for-nothing." The teachers in the schools teach the Indian children to despise the ways of their race. Then they lose the virtues of trustworthiness and honesty, for which the Indians were noteworthy.³ ' There is no such thing as "benevolent assimilation/' To one who knows the facts such a phrase sounds like flippant ignorance or a cruel jest. Even if one group is reduced to a small remnant in the midst of a great nation, assimilation of the residue does not follow. Black and white, in the United States, are now tending to more strict segregation. The remnants of our Indians partly retain Indian mores, partly adopt white mores. They languish in moral isolation and homelessness. They have no adjustment to any social environment. Gypsies have never adopted the mores of civilized life. They are morally and physically afloat in the world. There are in India and in the Russian empire great numbers of remnants of aboriginal tribes, and there are, all over the world, groups of pariahs, or *races maudites*, which the great groups will not assimilate. The Jews, although more numerous, and economically far stronger, are in the same attitude to the peoples amongst which they live.

117. Modification of the mores by agitation. To this point all projects of missions and reform must come. It must be recognized that what is proposed is an arbitrary action on the mores.

Therefore nothing sudden or big is possible. The enterprise is possible only if the mores are ready for it. The conditions of success lie in the mores. The methods must conform to the mores. That is why the agitator, reformer, prophet, reorganizer of society, who has found out "the truth " and wants to "get a law passed " to realize it right away, is only a mischief-maker. He has won considerable prestige in the last hundred years, but

¹ Portman, *Station Studies*, 78.

² *Amer. Anthropol.*, VI, 353, citing *Jo. Afr* Soc.*, 1903, 208.

⁸ *Gkhts*, LXXXVII, 129.